## A Caregiver's Perspective

VA Care Coordination and Caregiver Forum January 25 – 27, 2006

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## An overview

- Who we are and where we live
  - -- Before and after
  - -- Where is home?
- Chronology and Agency Coordination to date
  - -- Timeline
  - -- Agencies
- This caregiver's experience
  - -- Impact and views
  - -- The future

## Who we are, where we live

- Family 'snapshot'
  - -- Before and after OIF
  - -- Present day
- St. Mary's County
  - -- Federally designated as a shortage area for mental health services in June 2005
  - -- VA facilities
    - --- CBOC, Charlotte Hall (30:00)
    - --- VA Medical Center, Baltimore (2 hours)
    - --- VA Medical Center, Washington DC (2 hours)
    - --- Vet Centers: Five (1 ½ to 3 hours)

## Chronology and Agency Coordination

#### **Timeline**

Jan - Jul 03 **Operation Iraqi Freedom** 

Jan - Sep 04 Hospitalization, diagnosis, medical board, retirement

**Oct 04** Home

Nov 04 - May 05 Local community-based residential services and treatment

May 05 – Sep 05 National Institute of Mental Health voluntary in-patient

Oct 05 – Present Home

#### **Agencies**

Army

Navy

WRAMC

**HHS NIMH** 

GOV, DOD, VA **VA** offices

Norfolk

Roanoke (Reg)

Baltimore (Reg)

VAMC Balt, DC, PP

**CBOC CH** 

VR&E (Balt, DC Reg)

VA hqs

**STATE** 

DOE DORS

NAMI

DOL MD JOB SVC

SSA

LOCAL

HHS MHASM

A VR&E (Waldorf)

NAMI

**SSA** 

Pathways, Inc Affiliated Sante Gp

**Rock Creek Fndtn** 

**Individual Providers** 

## This caregiver's experience

Treatment, rehabilitation, and recovery

Intra and interagency coordination

Case management and oversight

VA intent

Are things working?

HOME reality

**CAW/ VA C3F 010C6** 

## Vision and Need

the vision....treatment, rehabilitation, and recovery

#### Disabled Veterans in rural areas need

- -- access to coordinated, continuous, comprehensive services
- -- trained and supported caregivers who are connected with appropriate resources
- -- partnership between family caregivers, the VA, and community based agencies and providers

...and they need them now.

#### The future?

#### **Numbers**

- 52% of OIF/OEF Veterans utilizing VA health care are 20 - 29 years old. 23% are between 30 - 39. (VA brief, Oct 05)
- 30% of troops surveyed have developed stress related MH problems 3 – 4 months after coming home from the Iraq war. (Army Surgeon General, Jul 05)
- 80% of all long term care in the U.S is provided by family caregivers. If unpaid family caregivers were replaced by paid homecare providers, est cost \$196B. (US Senate Special Committee on Aging, Jun 02)
- For the first three quarters of 2005, nearly 15% of Veterans aged 20-24 were jobless—three times the national average. (Washington Post, Nov 05)

#### **Initiatives**

- Military Amputee Training Center, contractor selection Mar 06 (AP, Jan 06)
- VA MH Special Funding in FY06, proposals solicited to close service gaps in CBOCs (Nov 05)
- SLGI Traumatic Injury Protection (\$25K-\$100K) (Dec 05)
- Veterans Millennium Health Care Act ('99), Jobs for Veterans Act ('02)
- Increased training for VA Staff, Family Support Groups, telehealth, MHICM

### Recommendations

Partner with Department of Health and Human Services to develop outreach to and coordinate services for disabled Veterans in rural areas.

Expand "seamless transition" to include support to and periodic followup with family caregivers when a disabled Veteran returns home, as part of case management.

Educate and train family caregivers so they are better equipped to care for their disabled Veteran and for themselves. Specifically target family caregivers in rural areas.

Institutionalize Family Support Programs. Eliminate administrative barriers to participation.

## The art of the possible – a model

## "VA Home Caregiver Program"

- -- Eligibility criteria: disabled Veteran's Priority Group; geographic location
- -- If application is approved, a contract is made
  - --- between the Veteran and family caregiver, and the VA
  - --- stipend to the caregiver
  - --- periodic on-site visits by VA or VA's designee
  - --- caregiver must take appropriate classes (VA pays)
- -- Potential partner
  - --- local junior colleges (medical certification courses), four year universities (MSW candidates)

# "They're not coming home to the VA. They're coming home."

LT Paul Kobs, USN (Ret) January 2006

CAW/ VA C3F 0106